

## **Guidance for Managers: Considering Flexible Working Requests**

### **1. Background**

As outlined in the Equal Opportunities Policy Statement, the University of Aberdeen is committed to a comprehensive policy of Equal Opportunities in employment for all categories of employees in all areas of the institution. The University of Aberdeen is committed to engaging in constructive dialogue with members of staff wishing to explore the possibility of flexible working practices to arrive at a mutually beneficial agreement wherever possible.

### **2. What are flexible working requests?**

There are many forms of flexible working arrangements, some of which are outlined below:

- Part time working
- Part year working
- Job sharing
- Flexible working hours
- Career breaks

### **3. Who can request flexible working?**

Any member of staff.

### **4. Receiving a Request**

If your employee is interested in working flexibly on a permanent or temporary basis, they should advise you in writing in the first instance.

### **5. Considering a Request**

If you can immediately agree to the request, you should liaise with your HR Adviser who will arrange for your employee to receive written confirmation of their new working pattern.

Any new arrangements will normally be for an initial 6 month period, and will be subject to regular reviews thereafter.

You may need to discuss your employee's request in more detail to evaluate how this may work in practice. You should arrange to meet with your employee as soon as possible, within 2 weeks of their written request being submitted. This is a formal meeting and your employee will have the right to be accompanied by a Trade Union Representative or work colleague. An HR Adviser or HR Partner will normally attend this meeting with you.

The checklist at the end of these guidelines can be used to help you consider any requests, and the overall impact this may have on your School/Section.

### **6. Declining a Request**

You should consider the request carefully looking at the benefits of the requested changes in working conditions for the employee and your School/Section, and weighing these up against any adverse business impact of implementing the changes. Requests for flexible working cannot be agreed if they conflict with the operational needs of the School/Section or the best management interests of the University.

If you reject the request it must be for one of the following business reasons as set out in the Legislation:

- the burden of additional costs
- an inability to reorganise work amongst existing staff
- an inability to recruit additional staff
- a detrimental impact on quality
- a detrimental impact on performance
- a detrimental effect on ability to meet customer demand
- insufficient work for the periods the employee proposes to work
- a planned structural change to your business

## 7. The Right to Appeal

If you decide to decline the request you must do so in writing, explaining your reasons why. Your employee also has the right to appeal your decision. The appeal will be heard by the Head of School/Head of Section, normally within 4 weeks of the written appeal being received.

Your HR Adviser and HR Partner can discuss the application of the policy with you in more detail if required. Please refer to the HR section of StaffNet for contact details of your local HR Team.

## 8. Checklist for Considering a Request:

<b>Managing People</b>	Is your employee managing others?
	What percentage of their time is spent managing others apart from the rest of their workload?
<b>Dependency on Others</b>	Who has the main responsibility for allocating the job holders workload and priorities?
	How frequently does the job holder need to report to you or liaise with you for direction?
	How frequently does the job holder liaise with other colleagues?
<b>Time Management</b>	How much of their work requires immediate attention as opposed to long term deadlines?
	Does the post need to be covered when the job holder is absent?
	Who would be required to undertake the job holder's duties in their absence?
<b>Duplicate Skills</b>	Are other people in the section doing a similar job to the job holder?
	How much of the work in the job can be undertaken by someone else?
<b>Workplace Dependant</b>	Is the equipment required to undertake the duties of this job only available in the workplace?
	Does the job holder require access to files and other paperwork/systems in the workplace?
<b>Confidentiality</b>	Are the duties of a highly confidential/sensitive nature?
<b>Workflow</b>	Does the job holder have control over the flow of their work?
	Is the job holder able to predict how busy they will be?
	Can the job holder identify when peak periods of work will be?
	When there is a peak period, how long does it last?

<b>Availability</b>	Can the job holder be contacted by colleagues when away from the workplace site?
	What percentage of the job holder's time is spent in meetings?
	Does the nature of the role mean the job holder is un-contactable (e.g. offsite working in remote areas)?
<b>Customer Relations</b>	Is the job holder required to respond to customer demand immediately or is it longer term?
	Is the work with the customer/client group shorter or longer term?
	Is the work undertaken for the same customers on a repetitive basis?
	Is there a requirement for the job holder to know the customers well?
	Does most of the communication with customers take place in writing / by phone / writing and phone / in person?